

NONCOMBATANT EVACUATION OPERATIONS: DEPARTMENT OF STATE'S
LESSONS LEARNED PROGRAM

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by

JEFFREY M. TITUS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE,
BUREAU OF DIPLOMATIC SECURITY
B.A., Utah State University, Logan, Utah, 2003

Fort Leavenworth, Kansas
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Name of Candidate: Jeffrey M. Titus

Thesis Title: Noncombatant Evacuation Operations: Department of State's Lessons Learned Program

Approved by:

_____, Thesis Committee Chair
Robert C. Garven, M.A.

_____, Member
Dwayne K. Wagner, M.A.

_____, Member
John G. Breen, Ph.D.

Accepted this 10th day of June 2016 by:

_____, Director, Graduate Degree Programs
Robert F. Baumann, Ph.D.

The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other U.S. governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

ABSTRACT

NONCOMBATANT EVACUATION OPERATIONS: DEPARTMENT OF STATE'S LESSONS LEARNED PROGRAM, by Jeffrey M. Titus, 81 pages.

Adequately capturing lessons learned from noncombatant evacuation operations is crucial to improving this inherently joint and interagency effort. As the lead federal agency for the evacuation of U.S. citizens from areas of natural disaster, civil unrest, or other large scale emergency situations, the Department of State should also take the lead in conducting after action reviews and capturing lessons learned following NEOs. This work seeks to determine the current processes and capabilities of the Department of State to capture these lessons learned, and analyze whether they could improve their process by collaborating with and learning from the joint and interagency communities.

The conclusion is that DOS can improve its NEO AAR and lessons learned process. The recommendations call for the establishment of a Department of State Center for Lessons Learned, using the Center for Army Lessons Learned as a template. Additionally, conducting joint AARs, utilizing the JLLIS database system and software technology such as IBM Watson for analysis, and integrating lessons learned more fully in the DOS education and training processes.

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ACRONYMS

AAR	After Action Review
CALL	Center for Army Lessons Learned
CMS	Crisis Management Support
CMU	Crisis Management Unit
DOD	Department of Defense
DOS	Department of State
DS	Diplomatic Security
DSCLL	Diplomatic Security Center for Lessons Learned
EAP	Emergency Action Plan
GAO	Government Accountability Office
JP	Joint Publication
NEO	Noncombatant Evacuation Operations
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
RSO	Regional Security Officer
SECDEF	Secretary of Defense
SECSTATE	Secretary of State
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The U.S. Department of State (DOS) and the Department of the Army (DA) both rotate positions frequently, deploy to a variety of countries, and work to promote and defend the interests of the American people overseas. Despite these shared values, the two agencies do not seem to collaborate effectively to transfer information useful for making better decisions.

— Andrew V. Walsh,
“Information Sharing between the U.S. Department State and the U.S. Army”

Overview

After action reviews (AARs) are a valuable part of improving organizations and operations. Properly conducted AARs provide valuable insight into what went right and what went wrong in a given situation or mission. These insights can be used, through careful analysis, to develop lessons learned. The term noncombatant evacuation operations (NEO) is a Department of Defense (DOD) term defined in the Joint Publication 1-02 as, “operations directed by the Department of State (DOS) or other appropriate authority, in conjunction with the DOD, whereby noncombatants are evacuated from foreign countries when their lives are endangered by war, civil unrest, or natural disaster to safe havens or to the United States.”¹ The DOS term for a NEO is “ordered departure.” For purposes of this study, the term NEO will be used synonymously with this term.²

DOS is the lead federal agency for planning and coordinating NEOs within the joint community. This effort is primarily conducted by the U.S. Ambassador and his country team within the country affected by civil unrest, natural disaster, or other factors requiring the evacuation of U.S. citizens. In major natural disaster scenarios or significant

civil unrest, the Ambassador will request support and resources from various agencies, primarily the DOD. These agencies and departments come together and work to overcome challenges to meeting the evacuation needs. Once the major operations conclude and the country team is able to handle the remaining effort, the various agencies and departments go their separate ways. Undoubtedly, each of these organizations conducts their own internal AAR to identify the positives and negatives of the operation. Also, the country team at the embassy or consulate involved in the evacuation operations will conduct an AAR, which will include an interagency and interdepartmental element. However, it seems the DOS could improve its NEO AAR and lessons learned process. The purpose of this study is to explore DOS's current process for conducting NEO AARs and capturing lessons learned, to explore options for improving the process with input from outside entities, and increasing actual implementation of lessons learned through modeling a superior lessons learned program.

Primary Research Question

Can improvements be made in the Department of State's process for conducting AARs and capturing lessons learned in the aftermath of a noncombatant evacuation operation by collaborating better with outside entities, including DOD, and learning from them?

Secondary Research Questions

What is the current DOS method for conducting NEOs and NEO AARs and capturing lessons learned following a NEO?

What previous recommendations have been made, especially by outside entities, to improve the lessons learned process in the aftermath of a NEO?

What can DOS learn from the Army's Lesson Learned process to improve DOS' NEO AAR and Lessons Learned methods?

Assumptions

The following assumptions are made in an effort to enhance the relevance of this study. Individual agencies and departments conduct their own internal, and to varying degrees, joint reviews following the execution of a NEO. Involvement in this process is on a limited basis and fails to consider the perspective of other parties not involved in the review process. DOS does sometimes conduct some form of AAR following a NEO, but again limited in its scope and degree of inclusiveness with interagency, NGO, and host nation partners. Classification of information undoubtedly plays a role in the limited comprehensive AAR process, capturing lessons learned, and ultimately any benefit possible through the distribution of those lessons.

No set standard, policy, or law exists requiring all the involved agencies and departments to submit to a formal AAR process or to share the individual and combined lessons learned. The ability to facilitate interagency and interdepartmental cooperation in this important area, without a directive or legislation, will be impaired.

The act of conducting an AAR following a NEO will not ensure that anything is actually learned. Once captured, this information will require sufficient analysis and distribution to ensure full consideration of all angles and by all concerned organizations. A means for utilizing the lessons learned, in some form of rehearsal or exercise, will

make the lessons learned meaningful. A lesson should only really be considered to be learned after there is evidence of change.

Definitions

After Action Review. A guided analysis of an organization's performance, conducted at appropriate times during and at the conclusion of a training event or operation with the objective of improving future performance. It includes a facilitator, event participants, and other observers.³

Country team. The senior, in-country, US coordinating and supervising body, headed by the chief of the US diplomatic mission, and composed of the senior member of each represented US department or agency, as desired by the chief of the US diplomatic mission.⁴

Emergency Action Committee. An organization established at a foreign service post by the Chief of Mission or principal officer for the purpose of directing and coordinating the post's response to contingencies. It consists of consular representatives and members of other local US Government agencies in a foreign country who assist in the implementation of a Department of State emergency action plan. Also called EAC.⁵

Host Nation. A nation that receives the forces and/or supplies of allied nations, coalition partners, and/or NATO organizations to be located on, to operate in, or to transit through its territory. Also called HN.⁶

Liaison. That contact or intercommunication maintained between elements of military forces or other agencies to ensure mutual understanding and unity of purpose and action.⁷

Noncombatant Evacuation Operation. Operations directed by the Department of State or other appropriate authority, in conjunction with the Department of Defense, whereby noncombatants are evacuated from foreign countries when their lives are endangered by war, civil unrest, or natural disaster to safe havens or to the United States. Also called NEOs.⁸

Ordered Departure. A procedure by which the number of US Government personnel, their dependents, or both, are reduced at a foreign service post. Departure is directed by the Department of State (initiated by the Chief of Mission or the Secretary of State) to designated safe havens with implementation of the combatant commander noncombatant evacuation operations plan.⁹

Repatriation. The procedure whereby American citizens and their families are officially processed back into the United States subsequent to an evacuation.¹⁰

Safe Haven. Designated area(s) to which noncombatants of the United States Government's responsibility and commercial vehicles and materiel may be evacuated during a domestic or other valid emergency.¹¹

Washington Liaison Group. An interagency committee and/or joint monitoring body, chaired by the Department of State with representation from the Department of Defense, established to coordinate the preparation and implementation of plans for evacuation of United States citizens abroad in emergencies. Also called WLG.¹²

Limitations

Noncombatant Evacuation Operations are inherently joint operations, and as such will suffer from chronic issues with information sharing and cooperation. It is acknowledged that the majority, if not all, of the departments and agencies involved in

NEO conduct their own internal AARs to address deficiencies directly related to their respective areas of involvement. Several of these agencies may even conduct their AARs in a classified forum. Therefore, gaining access to information residing with the various agencies and with potential classification issues will pose a probable limitation to the research. The research will be deliberately restricted to the unclassified realm. The purpose of this is to ensure availability of the research and recommended changes to the widest audience possible.

Delimitations

The research will be restricted to reviewing DOS and DOD AARs, conducted after previous NEOs, for evidence of a joint collection process, development of lessons learned, and distribution of those lessons across various departments and agencies. Also government reports and interviews with DOS and DOD lessons learned staff.

Conclusion

This study reviews previous DOS and DOD AARs, government reports, and interviews to determine the extent to which a collaborative approach is considered in gathering valuable lessons following a NEO. All embassy evacuations and large scale NEOs are inherently joint processes. After action reviews are an important part of any significant operation or effort. The information gleaned through this deliberate process can be analyzed and incorporated back into the institutions as lessons learned. These lessons learned, in order to be value added, must be distributed to a wide audience and used in training scenarios and future operations to improve upon past performance.

While the country teams at embassies consist of representatives from various agencies and therefore are inherently interagency or joint groups, the potential still exists for AARs and lessons learned to be primarily from a limited DOS perspective. NEOs always require the efforts of multiple agencies and departments operating outside the affected country or region and therefore, as the lead agency responsible for the conduct of NEOs, it is incumbent upon the DOS to take a lead in capturing lessons learned.

¹ Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication (JP) 1-02, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* (Washington, DC: Joint Chiefs of Staff, November 2010 as amended through February 2016), s.v. “noncombatant evacuation operation.”

² Ibid., s.v. “ordered departure.”

³ Headquarters, Department of the Army, Army Doctrine Reference Publication 7-0, *Training Units and Developing Leaders* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 2012), 3–73.

⁴ Joint Chiefs of Staff, JP 1-02, s.v. “country team.”

⁵ Ibid., s.v. “after action review.”

⁶ Ibid., s.v. “host nation.”

⁷ Ibid., s.v. “liaison.”

⁸ Ibid., s.v. “noncombatant evacuation operation.”

⁹ Ibid., s.v. “ordered departure.”

¹⁰ Ibid., s.v. “repatriation.”

¹¹ Ibid., s.v. “safe haven.”

¹² Ibid., s.v. “Washington liaison group.”

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study seeks to determine the extent to which DOS conducts AARs and captures lessons learned to improve NEOs and embassy evacuations as well as examines contemporary lessons learned programs. The following literature review is focused on unclassified DOS and DOD resources. First, an initial review of a 2007 GAO Report to Congress¹, wherein several deficiencies to the DOS AAR and lessons learned process are identified and potential solutions are provided. Additionally, an unclassified look at available DOS AARs for noncombatant evacuation operations with a focus on the process followed, and indications of a joint effort at identifying valuable lessons learned. This review will be contrasted with a limited review of DOD AARs for understanding the differences in the process between the two departments. Finally, military publications, theses, and public sector studies are reviewed for context on current AAR practices, identified best practices, and trends in efforts to establish and improve the lessons learned process.

Government Accountability Office (GAO): Report to Congress

In an October 2007 GAO Report on evacuation planning improvements provided to Congress, it was determined that since 1988 DOS has ordered over 270 evacuations from overseas posts due to civil strife, terrorist incidents, natural disasters, conventional war threats, and disease outbreaks. This amounts to an average of 14 evacuations per year. The investigation concluded that a weakness existed in a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between State and DOD which limits these agencies' effective

cooperation during a large scale evacuation. Among these limitations are issues such as: failing to address logistical capabilities and limitations of the respective departments and overlooking contact lists which could expedite communications between DOS and DOD personnel responding to a crisis.²

In terms of the weaknesses on the DOS side, the report states that evacuation preparations are limited due to a shortfall in DOS' systematic process to collect, analyze, and incorporate evacuation lessons learned. Nearly 60 percent of posts evacuated over the past 5 years reported that they did not conduct an evacuation "after action" report, as required by DOS policy. Further, it was found that no entity exists within DOS to ensure posts produce after action reports and no formal review process to analyze and incorporate lessons learned from these reports into guidance and training. From those AARs which did exist, DOS developed guidance on evacuation lessons learned and distributed them to U.S. overseas embassies and consulates. However, the documents contain voluminous and vague guidance and as a result, can be overlooked by posts. This is especially relevant due to high turnover of overseas post personnel, resulting in an inherent lack of institutional memory pertaining to prior evacuations. The GAO report highlights the high turnover to emphasize the need for posts to process, collect, analyze, and disseminate lessons learned from evacuations.³

The current DOS system involves distributing cables on lessons learned, but these reports are often combined with numerous other cables on various subjects, and can easily get lost in the shuffle. Additionally, cables may fail to include specific recommended evacuation planning actions. Resultant from this current process, many of the lessons learned from these sources have a tendency to be inconsistent and vague.⁴

DOS responded to the GAO report, and though they did not agree with all of the findings, they did concur with the recommendation to establish additional procedures to ensure that Emergency Action Plans (EAP) are updated, after action reports are collected, and that lessons learned are applied. However, DOS asserts that in contradiction to the GAO findings, the embassy staff, guided by the Ambassador, is responsible for planning evacuations and collecting lessons learned. They maintain that no need exists to establish an entity to oversee this effort.⁵

Department of State After Action Reports

Of the thirteen DOS AARs reviewed in this study, not a single report contained a joint approach to capturing lessons learned. Four of the reports reviewed contained a standardized format of pre-crisis preparation, immediate crisis response, and post crisis considerations. The other reports showed a lack of standardization in the process, but did indicate an attempt to capture salient facts related to the evacuation process.

In the Summer of 2006 the U.S. Government conducted an evacuation of nearly 15,000 U.S. citizens from Lebanon. This evacuation constituted the largest NEO since the Second World War. Many valuable lessons were gleaned and shared via an unclassified cable to all diplomatic and consular posts, to include: processing evacuees (managing crowds, advising evacuees on the various steps in the evacuation process, managing evacuee expectations, and minimizing their burdens); human resources and staffing issues, communications, and consular cooperation with the DOD. Specifically, in the realm of cooperation with the DOD, the consular affairs section emphasized discussing potential resources with military personnel assigned to the embassy, prior to a crisis.

Having a senior consular manager participate in a logistics meeting with DOD personnel

can provide a better understanding of available resources, as well as allow roles to be clearly identified and defined.⁶

At the conclusion of the cable, the author stated that feedback from posts and volunteers is being incorporated into a new Consular Affairs crisis application, which as of 2006 was under development. It is anticipated that later versions will include passport swipe capability to allow quick download of citizen information and a way to track cases from place to place. The Lebanon crisis also emphasized the need for one centralized, easily accessible “library” of policy guidance, logistical information, and operational documents for use by consular task forces and posts.⁷

U.S. Embassy Tel Aviv coordinated a multinational evacuation from the Gaza Strip during 19-22 January 2009. More than 500 foreign nationals, representing citizens from 36 countries, were successfully evacuated. Among them were over 150 American citizens and their immediate family members.⁸ The following excerpt and conclusions from the consular section’s AAR highlights the interagency and multinational cooperation which exists during the conduct of evacuation operations.

The conclusion reached during Embassy Tel Aviv’s AAR process was that the confusion that descends upon a region at war can make communication, travel, and decision-making extremely problematic. The evacuation coordinator, Embassy Tel Aviv, relied upon an extensive network of contacts in various Government of Israel (GOI) ministries, the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF), International Organizations, and within the participating embassies to overcome these limitations. However, even with the assistance of contacts from these offices, there was not a complete reduction in risks for the evacuees unable to leave Gaza. The embassy could not force the GOI to prioritize the

evacuation, could not eliminate bureaucratic hurdles, and could not ensure success of their proposed operation. The embassy had to further rely on U.S. Embassies in Amman, Cairo, and Jerusalem, as well as colleagues at third-country embassies in Tel Aviv.

Eventually arrangements were successfully coordinated for departure from Gaza despite the Travel Warning advice that “the ability of consular staff to offer timely assistance to U.S. citizens there is extremely limited.”⁹

Following the January 2010, 7.0 magnitude earthquake which struck Haiti with devastating results, a trend began to emerge in the format for AARs and capturing lessons learned. In a cable from U.S. Embassy Haiti, the AAR consisted of the main topics categories; Before it Hits: Pre-Crisis Preparation; Immediate Crisis Response; and Post Crisis Considerations.¹⁰ This same format was seen in the cable released following the March 2011, 9.0 magnitude earthquake that struck Japan, and the resulting tsunami and nuclear disaster which generated devastating results.¹¹ As evidence that a format is currently utilized within the DOS, the Department Operations Center posted their evacuation lessons learned, using similar topics, with several subtopics. Under the “Pre-Evacuation” topic are the subtopics of, “How can the Department improve interagency coordination?” and “How can the Department help prepare evacuees?” Under the “During Evacuation” topic is, “How can the Department improve coordination with posts?” and “What can the Department do to support evacuees?” The final topic is “Post evacuation efforts.”¹²

In July 2011, the DOS Bureau of Diplomatic Security (DS) through its Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC) and with ConocoPhillips, jointly sponsored a Best Practices for Crisis Management and Evacuation conference. Nearly 250 security and

crisis management professionals from various sectors of governmental, non-governmental, and multi-national corporations attended. The purpose of the conference was to bring together individuals and organizations with an overseas presence whose personnel and operations have been impacted by global crisis situations. OSAC and ConocoPhillips resolved to host this conference in the wake of a series of major events. In 2011 several significant incidents led to evacuations or partial evacuations of U.S. citizens from countries such as, Libya, Egypt, Cote d'Ivoire, Bahrain, and Japan.¹³

Over the course of two days, the conference provided traditional panel presentations as well as break-out sessions, which gave all participants, from speakers to audience members, the chance to share their own experiences, best practices, and lessons learned in responding to global crises. Following the conference, the OSAC released a written compilation of the proceedings. The paper is organized into three primary sections, Pre-Crisis Planning, Managing a Crisis, Post-Crisis Actions. The paper concludes that one resounding request from participants at the conference and in the follow-on survey, was for OSAC to create a communication platform where constituents could both seek and offer assistance during an evacuation. In addition to building a communication platform, the participants also identified the need to: change the way we plan for a crisis; re-evaluate how to integrate/provide information in the lead up to and during a crisis; re-visit current procedures and apply lessons learned from previous crises; reach out to organizations and companies outside of our sector to expand networks; rework tripwires; expand resources used in crises; and alter messaging to ensure greater commitment to planning, training, and resourcing from senior management.¹⁴

Department of Defense After Action Reports

In January 1991, the U.S. Embassy in Mogadishu, Somalia, in conjunction with the U.S. Navy and U.S. Marine Corps evacuated 281 people, from 30 different nationalities. Included among these evacuees were 8 ambassadors and 39 Soviet citizens. Adam Siegel, in his paper titled, “Easter Exit–The NEO from Mogadishu,” derived several lessons learned from the viewpoint of the military and the DOS. Much of the credit for why things went right was given to the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps. Specifically, the Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) had developed SOPs specific to NEOs, which proved to be an enhancing factor during the planning. The training and preparation for Operation Desert Shield also increased the level of preparedness of forces. Furthermore, close cooperation between the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps over the years essentially created a common command space and a combined command staff. Siegel also credits the U.S. ambassador’s understanding of his role and preparation of the embassy for evacuation, stating: “Unlike many other NEOs, the US ambassador had a clear understanding of his role. He had the Embassy organized for an evacuation, maintained a clear picture of the situation on the ground, and clearly expressed his intentions and orders to the inserted evac [sic] force.”¹⁵

There were also lessons learned which highlight some of the problems of the military and DOS preparation for and execution of NEOs. First, dated and inaccurate information. Two of the CH-53E helicopters flew around Mogadishu for nearly 20 minutes trying to locate the embassy compound. Second, the amphibious forces positioned in the Persian Gulf received late notification of the potential need for military support of the NEO. Several weeks before notifying the military, the embassy evacuated

all nonessential personnel. Third, there were several areas of deficiency in the embassy's ability to facilitate the NEO. Lack of direct communications capability between the embassy and evacuation forces and minimal landing zone marking capabilities were identified as the most significant. Finally, there were delays in amphibious forces movement south due to poor communication among the chain of command. Some of the links within the chain of command failed to receive orders and information on the situation in Mogadishu.¹⁶

Military Publications

The DOD Directive 3025.14, released on 26 February 2013, outlines the Department's responsibilities during an evacuation of U.S. citizens and aliens from threat areas. In the event of an emergency abroad, the DOD will support the Secretary of State in the fulfilment of his or her responsibilities, which are as follows: protect U.S. Citizens and nationals, and designated other persons, to include when necessary and feasible their evacuation to and welfare in relatively safe areas; reduce to a minimum the number of U.S. Citizens and nationals, and designated other persons, subject to the risk of death, harmful health exposures, or seizure of hostages; reduce to a minimum the number of US Citizens and nationals, and designated other persons, in probable or actual combat areas so that the combat effectiveness of U.S. and allied forces is not impaired.¹⁷ The DOD in conjunction with the SECSTATE, is to prepare plans for the protection, evacuation, and repatriation of DOD noncombatants in threatened areas abroad and when necessary implement those plans. These plans are to be integrated into DOS's plans for evacuating non-DOD noncombatants, and implemented when requested by the SECSTATE or Chief of Mission (COM). The COM is the President's personal representative to the host

country, and as such, he or she is the lead federal official for the protection and evacuation of all U.S. noncombatants, including DOD dependents. While it is the responsibility of the COM to order an evacuation, military personnel not under COM authority do not fall under this responsibility, except as agreed upon between DOS and DOD.¹⁸

The Joint Publication 3-68, *Noncombatant Evacuation Operations*, provided the following definition of NEO:

Noncombatant evacuation operations (NEOs) are conducted to assist the Department of State (DOS) in evacuating US citizens, Department of Defense (DOD) civilian personnel, and designated host nation (HN) and third country nationals whose lives are in danger from locations in a foreign nation to an appropriate safe haven. Although normally considered in connection with hostile action, evacuation may also be conducted in anticipation of, or in response to, any natural or manmade disaster.¹⁹

The publication goes on to further define the special characteristics of NEO and delineates the roles of the military and embassy personnel in the following terms:

The command and control structure and the political and diplomatic factors involved in timing the execution of the military support of NEOs make them different from other military operations. During NEOs the US ambassador, not the combatant commander (CCDR) or subordinate joint force commander (JFC), is the senior United States Government (USG) authority for the evacuation and, as such, is ultimately responsible for the successful completion of the NEO and the safety of the evacuees. The decision to evacuate a US embassy and the order to execute a NEO is political.²⁰

This DOD definition and description clearly identifies in doctrine that DOS is the lead for NEOs. While it addresses the command and control element, it says nothing about prior joint planning or a mechanism to collaborate in the lessons learned process to improve the interaction between DOD and DOS.

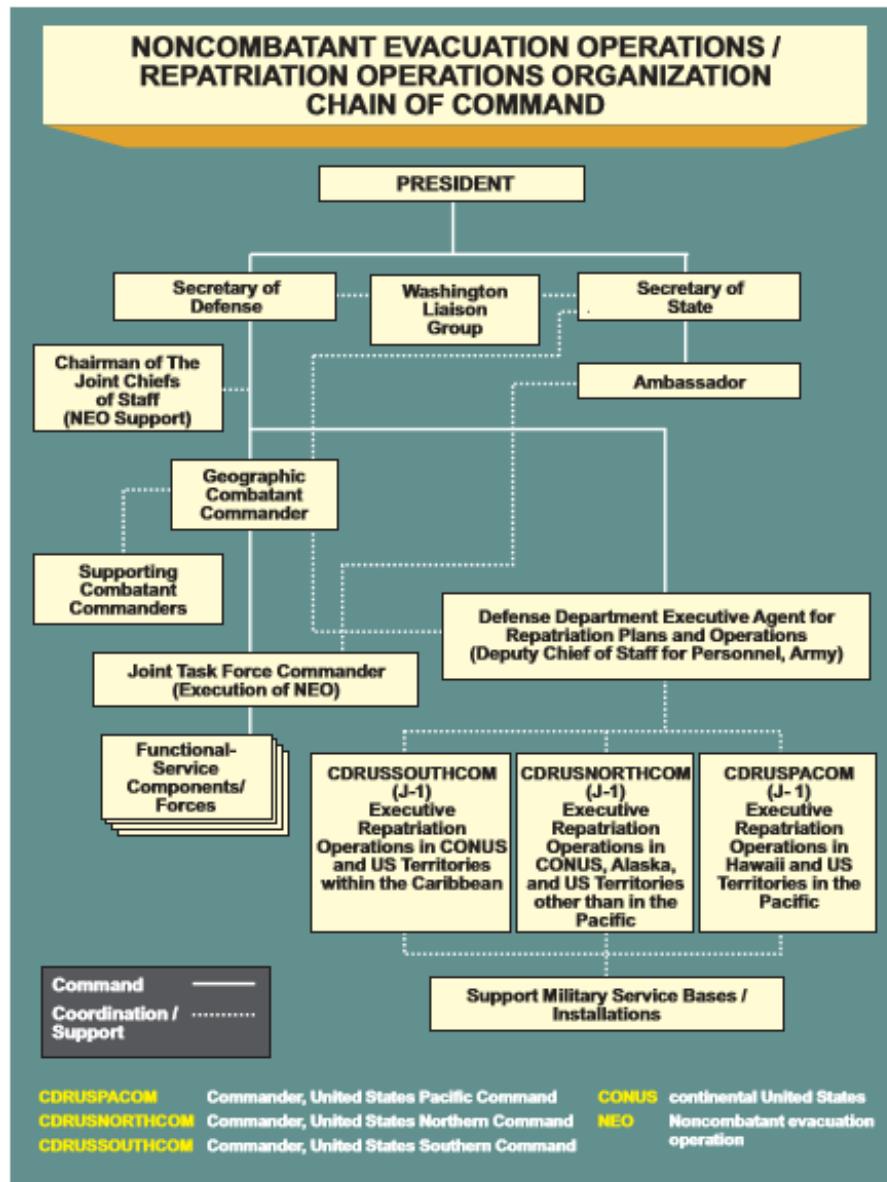


Figure 1. JP 3-68, Noncombatant Evacuation Operations/Repatriation Operations Organization Chain of Command

Source: Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication (JP) 3-68, *Noncombatant Evacuation Operations* (Washington, DC: Joint Chiefs of Staff, January 2007), III-2.

According to joint doctrine, upon completion of the NEO in which DOD resources or personnel are utilized, an after action report is required to be submitted to the

SECDEF containing a summary of recommendations and actions to improve future operations.²¹ Despite the clearly defined roles and the DOD requirement for conducting an AAR, there is no mention of a joint approach to capturing the lessons learned.

The need to identify and share information and lessons gleaned through training and/or combat operations has long been recognized by the Army. Over the years, the Army produced products such as “combat bulletins” and quarterly operation reports, dating back to World War II and the Korean War. These were produced to encourage and facilitate the sharing of combat experiences among soldiers. Units were able to learn from the mistakes of others and had the opportunity to implement tactics, techniques, and procedures to avoid making the same mistakes. It was not until 1985, when the Center for Army Lessons Learned (CALL) was established, that the Army formalized and made permanent a program to collect, analyze, and share lessons learned. Many militaries, government agencies, and the corporate world recognize the importance of capturing lessons and using that information to improve their operations.²²

One of the essential elements of an effective lessons learned program is an environment that allows self-analysis and self-criticism, without the need to assign blame. The Army was on the leading edge of this effort in that they allowed commanders to make honest mistakes and then facilitated forums to discuss those mistakes openly in order to identify what went wrong and how to correct those mistakes in the future. These lessons can then be utilized in future training iterations for other units with the benefit of learning from others’ mistakes.²³

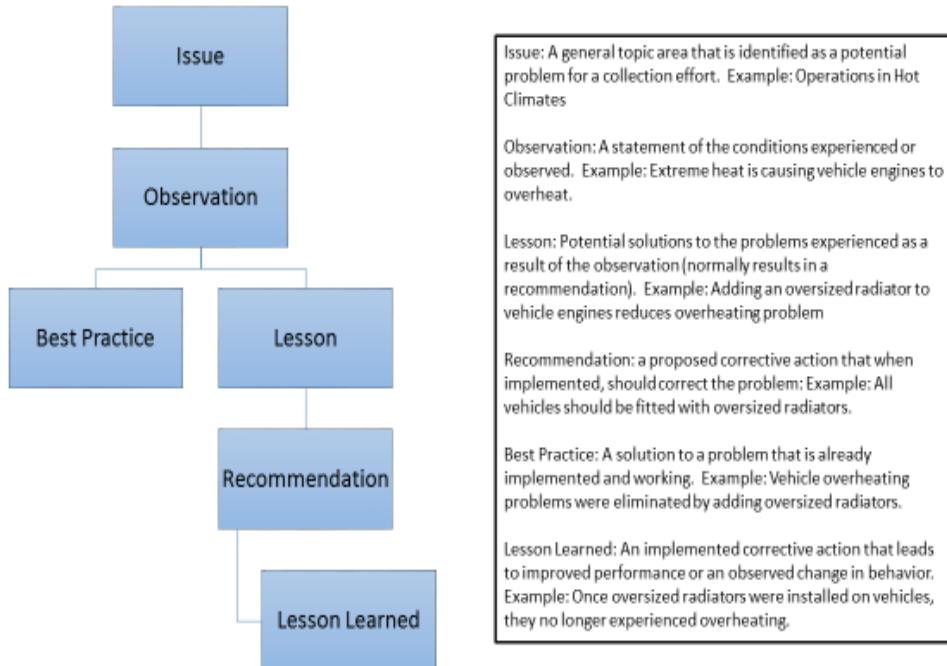


Figure 2. Key Terms and Definitions for Lessons Learned

Source: Center for Army Lessons Learned, *Establishing a Lessons Learned Program: Observations, Insights, and Lessons* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Government Printing Office, 2011), 6.

Figure 2 depicts the key terms and definitions of the lessons learned process as identified in the CALL Handbook, *Establishing a Lessons Learned Program*. Figure 3 depicts the entire deliberate process to obtain, analyze, archive, and implement lessons learned.

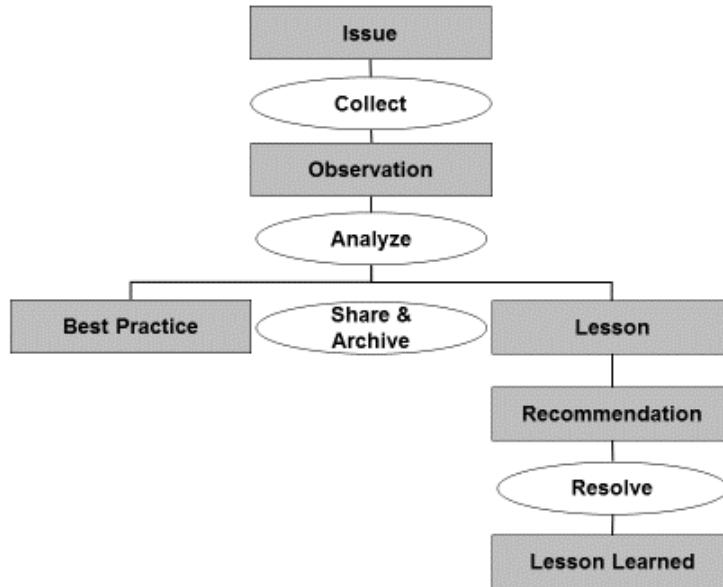


Figure 3. Lessons Learned Process

Source: Center for Army Lessons Learned, *Establishing a Lessons Learned Program: Observations, Insights, and Lessons* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Government Printing Office, 2011), 37.

A Lessons Learned Program can provide an organization significant benefits. Among these benefits are: a centralized location for searching lessons learned, which translates to time saving; reduction in expenditure due to changes in processes or procedures and avoidance of mistakes; connection with other “experts” and counterparts working on similar issues; improvement in decision making; improvement in performance of personnel; increase of organizational knowledge; and potential saving of lives and resources. One key to the success of a lessons learned program, which should be considered prior to implementation, is the “culture” of the organization. As noted earlier, an environment must exist wherein people feel comfortable discussing mistakes.

If this environment does not exist, effective implementation of and effective lessons learned program will be limited at best.²⁴

The June 2015 CALL Handbook provides information on the structure of CALL and the function of the various offices within CALL. At the CALL headquarters level, the Director is responsible for the overall leadership of the organization and the establishment of priorities for lessons learned collection, analysis, integration and dissemination. The Deputy Director assists the Director in the execution of these tasks and is responsible for overseeing budgetary, contracting, and personnel aspects that support the execution of CALL's mission. The Senior Enlisted Adviser at the headquarters level manages civilian and military personnel and routine administrative matters.²⁵

CALL is composed of six divisions:

1. Operations and Plans: "Comprised of three sections: Current Operations, Future Operations, and Plans. Responsible for planning, training, and operations to synchronize CALL's execution of the Army Lessons Learned Program (ALLP). Provides staff management for the integration of programs, processes and initiatives among CALL divisions, plus all information technology support and websites. Facilitates CALL's request for information (RFI) program."²⁶
2. Collections: "Supports communications between collectors involved in contingency operations and major training events and the operational and institutional Army. Supports CALL analysts by providing them with ongoing review, research, and feedback of raw observations. Deploys and manages

forward-deployed CALL embedded liaison officers and operation officers with collection teams while directing their collection efforts to support the Analysis Division's ongoing projects, studies, and writings. Supports the Analysis Division in collecting lessons and best practices from the Mission Command Training Program, Combat Training Centers (CTCs), regionally aligned forces, experiments, major training exercises, disasters, and units in unified land operations.”²⁷

3. Analysis: “Responsible for analyzing observations and lessons to identify key issues. Facilitate and monitor development of solutions. Facilitate rapid integration of lessons learned information into the institutional, operational, and self-development domains. Analyzes observations, lessons, and best practices in conjunction with Army proponents to identify issues requiring change using Doctrine, Organization, Training, Materiel, Leadership & Education, Personnel, and Facilities (DOTMLPF).”²⁸
4. Facilitation: “Encompasses collaboration, information sharing, issues resolution and consensus building across all levels of war. Contributes to the Army's ability to learn from operations, exercises, and real-world events. Serves as an envoy for the ALLP by offering strategy and annual plans and seeking out opportunities to gain and exchange lessons and best practices with unified action partners and other organizations internal and external to the Department of Defense.”²⁹
5. Army Lessons Learned Program: “Supports the CALL mission in two vital areas: Performing functions of the office of primary responsibility for the

AALP according to Army Reg. 11-33, Army Lessons Learned Program. Facilitating the Army Lessons Learned Forum to resolve issues and disseminate lessons and best practices.”³⁰

6. Dissemination: “Mission is to edit, design, publish, and disseminate information to the Army to save lives and help soldiers accomplish the mission the first time to standard. Provides the Army with electronic and print publications to support a wide range of unit missions at the tactical, operational, and theater/strategic levels of war.”³¹

CALL's products and publications include: Handbooks, Newsletters, Bulletins, Special studies, Graphic training aids, Initial impressions reports, and News from the Front articles. These publications can be accessed via the CALL websites, through the CALL RFI program, on the Joint Lessons Learned Information System.

Theses

Information sharing between the DOS and the U.S. Army is important to the successful execution of NEOs or any other joint operation. Major Andrew V. Walsh examined this particular question by looking at examples of collaboration. He specifically looks at the implementation of knowledge management tools and systems, as well as barrier to their use.³² A few similarities noted in the study are the frequent rotation of positions and deployments to a variety of countries, and the overlapping work of promoting and defending the interests of America overseas. The author concludes early in the study that despite these commonalities the two agencies do not effectively collaborate or share information for better decision making. Walsh cites Lee Hamilton, the former Vice Chair of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United

States, who in his report to congress asserted that “poor information sharing was the single greatest failure of our government in the lead-up to the 9/11 attacks.”³³ This failure to share information spanned the federal, state, and local agencies and authorities.³⁴

Knowledge management (KM) as a discipline came into formal existence in 1986 and was first introduced by Karl-Erik Sveiby and Karl Wiig. Two years later, in 1988, through the use of technology and collaboration using web systems, KM gained significant traction. KM is defined as, “the process of capturing, distributing, and effectively using knowledge.”³⁵ Perhaps the most prolific KM tool utilized by the DOS and U.S. Army is email. This form of communication remains the preferred KM tool despite various discussion boards, wikis, blogs, SharePoint and RSS feeds. However, many potential benefits of these other systems are limited by user knowledge and experience. A further complicating issue surrounding these systems is their use on various networks, some of which are unclassified, but for internal use only and some are of increasing degrees of sensitivity. Furthermore, these are not common systems between DOS and the Army and therefore information cannot be easily transferred. This not only constitutes a duplication in effort and increase workload, it also is an information overload.³⁶

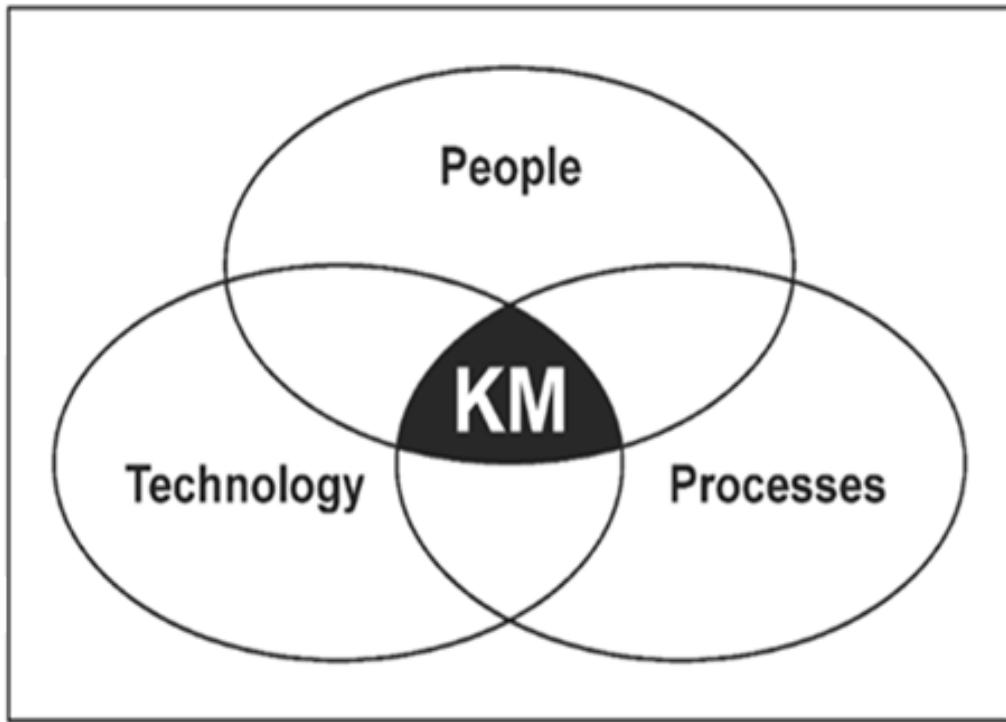


Figure 4. Knowledge Management Chart

Source: Headquarters, Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 6-01.1, *Knowledge Management Section* (Washington, DC: U.S. Army, 2008), 1-7.

Aside from the inability of inter network communication between DOS and Army systems there are other barriers to KM use, which extends beyond these two agencies. Culture and perceptions of trustworthiness are significant and not easily overcome barriers. PFC Bradley Manning's public distribution of thousands of confidential and secret DOS cables significantly impacted the level of trust between the Army and DOS. The controversy surrounding the Benghazi incident, along with public questions about Secretary Clinton's email practices, have impacted the perception of DOS' trustworthiness.³⁷ Incidents such as these can negatively impact an agency's or

department's willingness to share information with outside entities, for fear that it could be compromised through inadvertent or deliberate leaks.

Walsh provides several recommendations to improve the information sharing between the DOS and the Army:

1. Work to expose knowledge management systems and tools from State to U.S. Army networks and users.
2. Focus on easy to integrate systems with most benefit like Diplopedia.
3. Build systems and tools that are accessible via mobile devices by both groups.
4. Integrate PKI authentication with cross-site trusts so users in both organizations can access content from each other easily.
5. Utilize commercial off the shelf systems and services to build relationships and integrate groups with common goals and missions between organizations.
6. Provide feedback on all knowledge management products and systems to both groups to track which systems provide the most value and identify methods for tailoring content and capabilities to match user requirements.
7. Where possible, fund initiatives jointly so that both groups have a stake in the outcome and can work together with a sense of ownership on initiatives.
8. Focus on unclassified opportunities to build “quick wins” and success stories that show that collaborations and data sharing is possible, provides value, and makes a difference in decision making.
9. Integrate knowledge management into day to day business processes within and between both organizations to foster continual improvement of processes and collaboration that exists before a crisis.

10. Build trusts between members of each group by encouraging collaboration on any aspects of both organizations missions whenever possible.
11. Encourage whole of government approaches through daily integrated plans.
12. Continue to reevaluate the relationships between State and the Army at all levels and after each engagement opportunity overseas.
13. Determine what worked and what did not and how we can shape future outcomes and publish findings in the InterAgency Journal to track performance and changes.³⁸

Public Sector

The lessons learned and knowledge management models and tools are not exclusive to government agencies. Many organizations collect, analyze, store and distribute the collective knowledge of their members. This practice can improve organizational decision processes. One significant limitation of many of the current lessons learned systems is that they do not efficiently bring lessons to the attention of the end user at the time and place of need. This creates a gap in the distribution of these vital lessons.³⁹

The authors of *Bridging the Lesson Distribution Gap* provide three approaches for eliminating this gap. First, identified lessons can be incorporated directly into doctrine, which defines the processes to be employed by an organization's members. The doctrine is updated to include the knowledge contained in the lesson. For example, the Army's CALL deploys teams of lesson analysts and doctrine experts to perform such updates. A second way to bridge this gap involves “pushing” lessons to potential users, through list servers or with the use of applications such as “intelligent spiders,” which search many

sites or repositories for specific information which can be accessed through a search engine. For example, two of the Department of Energy's (DOE's) sites already employ portals containing spiders. However, spiders are not integrated with the decision support processes that the lessons target. Thus, after retrieving lessons with a spider, users must characterize the situations for which they are useful, recall them when they encounter an applicable decision support context, and interpret them correctly so that they are properly reused. A third approach to bridging the lesson distribution gap involves, tightly integrating the lesson repository with a decision support tool, such as Active Lesson Delivery System (ALDS) or Hierarchical Interactive Case-based Architecture for Planning System (HICAPS).⁴⁰ According to David Aha and his colleagues:

We identified a problem with distribution lessons, called the lesson distribution gap, which is crucial to many lessons learned organizations. To address this problem, we introduced an approach called monitored distribution, which is characterized by a tight integration with a decision support tool that manages processes that the lessons can potentially improve. We implemented this approach ALDS, a case retrieval system, and evaluated its capability in the context of a module for HICAP, a plan authoring tool. Our experiments with a simulated military planning domain (i.e., for noncombatant evacuation operation) showed that, by using lessons, monitored distribution can help to significantly improve plan performance measures. In summary, we demonstrated a technology that brings lessons to the attention of users when and where they are needed and applicable.⁴¹

This sort of tool could be invaluable to a DOS lessons learned program.

The literature review was subject to a prescribed research methodology.

¹United States Government Accountability Office (GAO), *State Department: Evacuation Planning and Preparations for Overseas Posts Can Be Improved* (Washington, DC: GAO, 2007).

² Ibid., highlights.

³ Ibid., 3-5.

⁴ Ibid., 27-30.

⁵ Ibid., 15, 27-30.

⁶ Cable, R 132149Z Mar 07, SECSTATE WASHDC, Large-scale Evacuations: Consular Lessons Learned, Unclassified State 031878.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Cable, Tel Aviv 437: Coordinating The Gaza Evacuation: Tel Aviv's Account Unclassified Tel Aviv 000437 Ref: 2008 Cairo 0104.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Cable, 12 State 8164, SECSTATE WASHDC, Earthquake Best Practices-Using Haiti as an Example, Unclassified State 008164.

¹¹ SECSTATE WASHDC, Lessons Learned From The Japanese Triple Disaster, 2012, Unclassified State 097494.

¹² Diplopedia, s.v. "Evacuation Lessons Learned," accessed 3 March 2016, Diplopedia.state.gov.

¹³ Elena Carrington and Meredith Wilson, "Crisis Management And Evacuation Best Practices" (paper presented at OSAC-ConocoPhillips Best Practices for Crisis Management and Evacuation conference, U.S. State Department, Washington, DC, July 13, 2011), 2.

¹⁴ Ibid., 2-15.

¹⁵ Adam B. Siegel, "Eastern Exit: The Noncombatant Evacuation Operation (NEO) From Mogadishu, Somalia in January 1991" (Thesis, Center For Naval Analyses, 1991), v-vi.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ U.S. Department of Defense, Directive 3025.14, *Evacuation of U.S. Citizens and Designated Aliens from Threatened Areas Abroad* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, February 2013).

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication (JP) 3-68, *Noncombatant Evacuation Operations* (Washington, DC: Joint Chiefs of Staff, January 2007), ix.

²⁰ Ibid., I-3.

²¹ Ibid., III-6.

²² Center for Army Lessons Learned, *Establishing a Lessons Learned Program* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Government Printing Office, 2011), iii.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid., 3-5.

²⁵ Center for Army Lessons Learned, *Handbook: CALL Services* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Government Printing Office, 2015), 1.

²⁶ Ibid., 2.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid., 2-3.

³² Andrew V. Walsh, “Information Sharing Between the U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Army: Using Knowledge Management Technology and Tools to Bridge the Gap” (Master’s thesis, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, KS, 2015).

³³ Subcommittee on Intelligence, Information Sharing, and Terrorism Risk Assessment Committee on Homeland Security, Prepared Statement of Lee H. Hamilton Former Vice Chair National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2005).

³⁴ Walsh.

³⁵ Ibid., 17-18.

³⁶ Ibid., 25-26.

³⁷ Ibid., 49-52.

³⁸ Ibid., 64-65.

³⁹ David W. Aha et al., “Bridging the Lesson Distribution Gap” (paper presented at International Joint Conference on Artificial Intelligence, Washington, DC, January 2001).

⁴⁰ Ibid., 1.

⁴¹ Ibid., 6.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Overview

The purpose of this study was to determine if improvements can be made in the DOS' process for conducting AARs and implementing lessons learned following NEOs by collaborating and learning from all parties involved in a NEO. A review of unclassified documents, including DOS cables, military publications, other government agency documents, and private sector works was conducted to determine the effectiveness of the DOS AAR process. Furthermore, an effort was made to analyze and understand government and private sector best practices in this area of study.

In addition to the literature review and analysis, interviews with personnel from the Center for Army Lessons Learned (CALL), the DOS Crisis Management Unit (CMU), and the Diplomatic Security Center for Lessons Learned (DSCLL) provide up-to-date information on current efforts to effectively capture lessons learned through the AAR process and distribute those lessons within the respective organizations and across the joint and interagency spectrum. Qualitative analysis conducted in this study included government documents, graduate theses, periodicals, and web-based resources relating to lessons learned and knowledge management.

Data Collection

The data and sources consulted during the course of this research spanned the spectrum of DOS related information, DOD documents and sources, data from other governmental agencies, as well as from the private sector. While special attention was

given to the DOS sources, in order to determine the level to which evacuations and NEOs are reviewed, captured and analyzed, other sources were sought to determine comparative levels in general terms of AARs and capturing lessons learned.

The interviews conducted as part of the data collection were designed specifically to ascertain the current degree to which the DOS is conducting AARs and capturing lessons learned and using those lessons in the training of DOS personnel. Additionally, the literature available lacked information on the joint nature of this process within the DOS. From the DOD perspective, the interview provided insight specifically into the U.S. Army's method for capturing lessons learned, not only after NEOs, but in general. This interview also provided insight into how the CALL is organized, staffed, and resourced to facilitate a robust and comprehensive lessons learned process.

Data Analysis

The primary data analysis for this research involved examination of past embassy evacuations, documented AARs, and lessons learned. By reviewing these documents for indications of trends in lessons learned, as recorded by the various authors of those documents, it provided an indication of the extent to which lessons learned are captured and incorporated into future evacuations. The interviews provided an additional level of data against which the documented AARs and lessons learned could be analyzed. By interviewing CALL personnel, who are currently engaged in a collection and distribution process, the current DOS level of effort can be compared and analyzed. By interviewing the subject matter experts from the DOS CMU, who are actively engage in the planning of evacuations and processes for capturing lessons learned, the literature can be analyzed for completeness, accuracy, and consistency.

Possible Sources of Bias

The resources cited in the literature review and references used in this paper provide the context and understanding to complete the research methodology and answer the research questions posed. It bears mentioning that the author's experience in conducting a NEO in Haiti and planning for a NEO from Tripoli, could have created a bias in how the material was perceived, interpreted and analyzed. Additionally, the author's experience attending the U.S. Army's Intermediate Level Education (ILE) course as the Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, could have shaped the perception of how an AAR should be conducted and lessons learned captured and distributed.

Conducting interviews with the individuals at CALL, DOS CMU, and DSCLL allowed the author to contrast and compare information compiled through the literature review to secondary sources. As this study is focused specifically on the DOS process for conducting AARs and capturing lessons learned, the potential for bias in the interview with the individual from CMU exists. Again, conducting the interview with CALL personnel provided an outside perspective on potential best practices for AARs and lessons learned. Upon completing the interviews, a transcribed copy was provided to each of the interviewees for review of accuracy and completeness in the capturing of their responses. These measures were taken in the attempt to remove bias from this research and to add an additional level of rigor.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS

Introduction

The purpose of this research is to determine if improvements need to be made in the DOS process for conducting AARs and capturing lessons learned in the aftermath of a NEO by collaborating better with outside entities, including DOD, and learning from them. Secondary questions to this help build a better overall picture of the AAR process and elements of adequately capturing and disseminating lessons learned. These secondary questions include:

1. What is the current DOS method for conducting NEOs and NEO AARs, and capturing lessons learned following a NEO?
2. What previous recommendations have been made, especially by outside entities, to improve the lessons learned process in the aftermath of a NEO?
3. What can we learn from the Army's Lesson Learned process to improve DOS' methods?

This analysis will seek to identify and analyze current DOS efforts and practices for conducting AARs following NEOs, as well as the process for analyzing and distributing these lessons learned throughout the Department. Sources summarized in the Literature Review are a valuable resource for analysis. Through interviews with personnel at the State Department's CMU, DS Operations Planning Staff, and the Center for Army Lessons Learned (CALL), insight can be gained into current operations of the DOS. Contrasting DOS's methods with those of CALL gives us a measuring stick and standard for comparison.

What is the current DOS method for conducting NEOs
and NEO AARs and capturing lessons
learned following a NEO?

What is the current DOS method for
conducting NEOs?

To better understand the AAR and lessons learned process, it is helpful to understand how a NEO is conducted. At each embassy, the Chief of Mission (COM) is ultimately responsible for the evacuation of American citizens. The Country Team is the entity responsible for the actual planning and conduct of the evacuation. In order to ensure proper planning, the Country Team relies initially on the Emergency Action Plan (EAP) to guide their efforts. Once the COM and the Country Team determine an evacuation is needed, this decision will be ultimately reviewed and approved by the Under Secretary for Management.¹

To support post in the evacuation effort, the Operations Center's Office of Crisis Management (CMS) will create a Task Force, which will include representatives from the affected DOS Regional Bureau, Consular Affairs (CA), Diplomatic Security (DS), Public Affairs (PA), Political-Military, and other stakeholders as necessary. DOD and other interagency partners will be members of the task force. The task force will serve to deconflict issues, be a clearinghouse for information, streamline department communications, and facilitate decision making. The Task Force efforts will also include significant involvement of the Deputies Committee and the NSC. Additionally, the Washington Liaison Group (as conceived in the 1998 DOS-DOD MOA on Evacuations) is an interagency body that consults and plans for evacuations, including NEOs. Members include DOS, USAID, DOD, HHS, and Peace Corps. If other agencies are represented at the post in question, Washington-based representatives from those agencies could also

participate in WLG meetings. Higher level planning for an evacuation will also be conducted at Deputies Committee level. If and or when the COM and the Country Team determine that they are unable to facilitate the evacuation without additional resources and support, an official request for DOD support will be submitted through Executive Secretary channels. It is important that Post and the COCOMs do not make requests and promises so as to get ahead of Washington's discussions and decision making process.²

The DOD divides the world regionally into Unified Combatant Commands: NORTHCOM, SOUTHCOM, AFRICOM, EUCOM, CENTCOM, and PACOM. Similarly, the DOS Regional Bureaus are responsible for countries within their geographic regions, which are as follows: Africa, East Asia and the Pacific, Europe and Eurasia, the Near East, South and Central Asia, the Western Hemisphere, and International Organizations. An Assistant Secretary is assigned to each of these geographic bureaus.³ Close coordination with the DOD is paramount to a successful evacuation.

What is the current process for conducting a NEO after action review (AAR)?

As is evidenced from the preceding review of the various entities potentially involved in a large scale evacuation of American citizens, the list of who should be involved in an AAR can become quite extensive. The question now becomes, "Who is currently involved in the AAR process following a NEO?" According to an operations planning specialist in the DS Operations Planning Staff, participation varies depending on the crisis, but at a minimum will consist of post and all the entities in Washington (to include interagency representatives) who participated in the Task Force.⁴ During the

literature review for this study, little evidence was found to support the assertion that all these NEO participants actually participate in an AAR process. Contrary to the interview, many posts do in fact submit a report in the form of a cable. The preponderance of the reports are produced by the Consular Affairs section with little evidence of an inclusive product from all involved parties.⁵ In the interview with David Futch from the Army's CALL office, he stated, "The true weakness of the process is that we do some of these interagency things. . . . And it's pretty much the same thing when it's all said and done. We never come together and sit in one place at one time and have a discussion about what just happened." He went on to say that has improved in domestic operations, but not in the foreign theater of operations. It seems there is an acknowledged lack of cooperative follow-up and closure for the improvement process following activities such as NEOs.

What is the current DOS method for capturing lessons learned following a NEO?

While DOS does not currently have an established lessons learned process, the Bureau of Diplomatic Security (DS) is developing one. They established the Diplomatic Security Operations Planning Staff in 2013, which was created in the aftermath of the Benghazi attack and is tasked with a few main lines of effort. First, they conduct strategic operations planning for various DS and DOS missions, similar to what a DOD 3/5/7 (plans, operations, and training) shop would conduct for current and future operations.⁶ For example, they will plan security support for the future and eventual return of diplomatic presence to places such as Sanaa, Yemen or Tripoli, Libya or other locations where the United States does not have a current operating embassy or consulate. Planning conducted through DS' deliberate planning process (DPP) is similar to the Army's

military decision making process (MDMP) or the Marine Corps Planning Process (MCPP). Many of these operations require the increased participation of the DOD and therefore, the DPP ensures a commonality in planning and language with the various military units. The second area of responsibility for the DS Operations Planning Staff is to serve as subject matter experts for the planning and execution of these missions. Third area is to manage the lessons learned program for DS. In their current form, the DS Operations Planning Staff consists of 10 personnel: it is headed and staffed by an FS-01 DS special agent, a deputy chief FS-02 DS special agent, two FS-03 DS special agent operations planning officers, two GS-13 Civil Servant operations planning specialists, two military fellows, one military detailee, and one contract specialist. The military fellows and detailee are critical components in terms of interagency planning and coordination.⁷ The following chart illustrates the organization of the office, based on information received from Michael Fowler, of the Operations Planning Staff, during an interview.

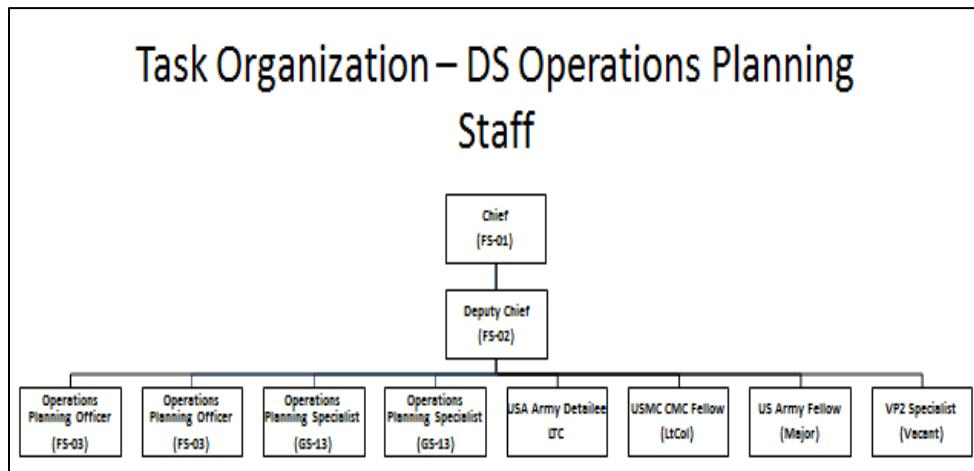


Figure 5. Organization Chart

Source: Created by author.

The lessons learned office within the DS Operations Planning Staff is referred to as the Diplomatic Security Center for Lessons Learned (DSCLL). The below DSCLL vision and mission statements highlight what this newly conceived entity is seeking to accomplish.

Vision

Create an information sharing culture within DS whereby all personnel, from the most junior personnel to the most senior leaders, accepts his or her responsibility to submit positive and negative information in a manner that improves the organization at the strategic, operational and tactical levels.⁸

Mission

DSCLL serves as the Bureau of Diplomatic Security's premier center for sharing lessons learned, best practices, operations plans and products derived from the Deliberate Planning Process (DPP), and professional reading material in order to provide leading edge knowledge that supports the DS community and its partners in the planning and execution of their assigned mission(s).⁹

The DSCLL is currently capable of providing information and resources through “three pots of information”. The first pot of information is a collection of operations planning products produced at various posts and through submission to the DSCLL that can then be uploaded to the SharePoint site and become available for review by those with access. This creates an avenue for personnel to utilize those documents as templates for their own planning purposes. In addition to the use of those templates, others can see how previous missions were conducted and garner best practices. The second pot of information is the assembly of AARs into a central location which can then be viewed by a wide audience. The current collection of AARs range from NEOs to things as simple as motorcade movements, which date back to the 1980s. The third information area is professional reading material. Members of the DSCLL actively seek information relevant and beneficial to federal law enforcement officers and civil service personnel employed

by DS. During the first 11 months of DSCLLs existence, they collected 521 documents from a variety of sources and sorted them into these various pots of information.¹⁰

The DSCLL developed an AAR template, which is available through the SharePoint site. This template (see Appendix A) is structured to capture what was supposed to happen, what actually happened, and what best practices or lessons learned were derived from that particular mission or event. Once an AAR is approved for further dissemination by the originating agency, it can then be sent to DSCLL for inclusion in the AAR repository on SharePoint. Upon receipt of the AAR, DSCLL personnel will conduct a quality control check to ensure it meets a level of professionalism and is not intended to simply denigrate others. DSCLL personnel do not act as SMEs on the particular event or issues, and rely upon the originating agency to conduct an analysis on the report and lessons learned.¹¹

DSCLL has a noble mission and its organization is a start towards capturing lessons learned in DOS. However, in an interview with a representative from the Army Center for Lessons Learned (CALL) it was stated that, “In the Army Lesson’s Learned program, we don’t say you have a lesson learned until there’s been a change in behavior.”¹² While it is important to collect information and make it available to those in positions where the information becomes relevant and useful, it is not enough to state that you have a lessons learned program simply by virtue of the fact that information is made available. CALL identifies changes brought about a result of the lesson learned program through passive and active means. The passive method is through simple observation. They will look to see if anyone raises the issue again and if they do not, then there is the assumption that it has been solved. In terms of active identification of a lesson learned,

CALL puts people on the ground with units or at various locations to see if the change they are looking for exists. If they identify the desired change, then it is deemed to be a lesson learned. If they do not see evidence of change, then they put that particular issue back in the integration phase and continue the effort.¹³ DSCLL has not yet developed to the point where they can achieve this whole process of analysis, application, and assessment.

The preceding paragraphs describe the current DOS method for conducting NEOs, NEO AARs, and capturing Lessons Learned. There is an established method for conducting NEOs that relies on individual Embassy Emergency Action Plans, Embassy Country Teams, task forces in D.C. composed of involved entities, and often includes calling on the DOD or involving other embassies or countries. The current process for conducting AARs does not include all the involved parties, is usually generated by the consular section at the involved embassy, addresses three primary questions, and is distributed via cable. The DOS as a whole does not have a separate entity tasked with capturing Lessons Learned, but DS, a bureau within DOS, created the Operations Planning Staff containing a Lessons Learned department (DSCLL) in 2013. The DSCLL is working on compiling and collecting AARs and other lessons learned products, but is not yet capable of thorough analysis, application, and assessment.

What previous recommendations have been made, especially by outside entities, to improve the lessons learned process in the aftermath of a NEO?

External review panels and internal DOS entities have made attempts to improve the DOS lessons learned process in the aftermath of a NEO. Outside entities who have evaluated this process include the Government Accountability Office and an Independent

Review Panel formed by DOS on the recommendation of the Accountability Review Board following the Benghazi attacks. Internal efforts have been made also. These include an Overseas Advisory Council (OSAC) organized NEO conference and individual NEO AARs from various embassies or task forces. Per an interview with DSCLL staff, two primary areas of improvement that multiple AARs have identified include DOD/DOS communication and flow of information challenges. Many recommendations made by these external and internal groups have been addressed at some level, but overall the recommendations have not been incorporated fully into the DOS process.

External Reviews and Findings

Several independent reports and panels have evaluated the DOS lessons learned process in the aftermath of NEOs and issued recommendations for improvement, including a report made by the Government Accountability Office in 2011 and an Independent Review Panel formed in 2015. DOS has acted on some of the recommendations made by those groups, but has not implemented many of them.

The GAO report discussed in chapter two of this study clearly identified short falls in DOS' process to systematically collect, analyze, and incorporate lessons learned from NEOs.¹⁴ While this report was intended to bring about change and improve not only the lessons learned process, but also the overall capability of DOS to respond to crises and safely evacuate American citizens in harms way. The report pointed out that nearly 60 percent of posts evacuated over the past 5 years reported that they did not conduct an evacuation "after action" report, as required by DOS policy. The Department agreed with the recommendations to establish certain procedures to address the need to constantly

update Emergency Action Plans (EAP). However, they maintained that the embassy staff and the Ambassador are responsible for planning evacuations and collecting lessons learned. The conclusion within the department at that time, despite the recommendation, was that they did not need to establish an entity to oversee this effort.¹⁵

Outside evaluations of DOS' AAR and lessons learned processes continued to disagree with DOS' appraisal that having embassy staff collect lessons learned was adequate. In August 2013, an Independent Panel on Best Practices released a report which stated the following:

From the Panel's interaction with the United Nations (UN), the New York Police Department (NYPD), private sector representatives, Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) representatives, foreign government entities and other USG agencies who operate overseas, one best practice they all follow is an immediate "hot wash" or after-action debriefing of key participants following critical operational events. Whether a man-made crisis, a traumatic event such as Benghazi, or natural disaster, these organizations use this best practice to identify lessons learned, both good and bad, while information and the experiences of personnel involved is still in sharp focus. These lessons are then factored into communications with employees; crisis, tactical and management training; planning and logistics in support of missions; and, new intelligence requirements. This is further programmed into their institutional risk management process to ensure that every event, not just those with a negative outcome, becomes a learning experience for the entire organization. Some organizations, even if not affected by an event, use it as a management exercise to discuss and plan how they would react in similar circumstances. For example, on foreign government organization informed the Panel that within 90 days of the release of the unclassified Benghazi ARB report they had assembled a team to study, dissect, and incorporated the identified lessons learned into their own management and training.¹⁶

The report further identified that among DS personnel, the majority were unaware of any internal lessons learned process or they referred to the Regional Security Office (RSO) Knowledge Database. However, it was the finding of the Panel that the DS Knowledge Database is not functional. At the time of the report, some DOS personnel operated under the belief that the Accountability Review Board (ARB) process served as the

Departments lessons learned program. The DOS Inspector General (IG) cited that between 1998 and 2012 there were a total of 12 ARBs conducted, despite there being 273 attacks against U.S. diplomatic facilities or personnel during that timeframe.¹⁷ According to the panel, the DOS clearly was not up to standard in their lessons learned process.

In their report, the Independent Review Panel also released several recommendations, among which were two specifically related to lessons learned:

15. The Department should establish a formalized lessons learned process and accompanying FAM policy to ensure a timely debriefing of all personnel who have participated in critical operational events to collect and preserve the knowledge gained from these personnel so that it may be then incorporated into training, management, and policy processes throughout the Department.¹⁸
16. The Bureau of Diplomatic Security should establish a formalized lessons learned process and ensure that it is integrated into the recommended Department-wide process. The lessons learned process should involve coordination with appropriate DS entities to obtain and incorporate the knowledge and experience of DS personnel.¹⁹

Have these recommendations been addressed? DOS has assigned the task to Office of Management Policy, Rightsizing, and Innovation (M/PRI), but has not yet formally established a lessons learned program. The Bureau of Diplomatic Security has made a concerted effort to establish a formalized process, through the establishment of the DSCLL. However, it was not intended that the DSCLL serve as the DOS lessons learned program, rather, as mentioned above, it should be integrated into the recommended Department-wide process.

The GAO report recommendations to increase updates for EAPs and improve the AAR process were acknowledged and addressed by the DOS. However, establishing an entity to oversee the Lessons Learned process on a Department-wide level was not. Some of the Independent Review Panels recommendations have been heeded also. DS has

established a formalized lessons learned process and entity. However, the Independent Review Panel's recommendations to establish a formalized process and to implement a FAM policy have not been followed completely as of yet. The Office of Management Policy, Rightsizing, and Innovation (M/PRI) is currently working to establish some form of a lessons learned operation.²⁰

Internal Improvement Efforts

Several internal efforts have been made toward improving the NEO and lessons learned process as well. They include an OSAC conference, individual NEO AARs, and the formation of the Diplomatic Security's Overseas Protective Operations (DS/OPO) and DSCLL.

The July 2011 Best Practices for Crisis Management and Evacuation Conference co-hosted by the DS Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC) and ConocoPhillips is one example of an attempt within DOS/DS to further the lessons learned effort. This conference served to bring the interagency and private organizations together to identify best practices and lessons learned specific to crisis situations requiring the evacuation of American citizens and others at increased risk due to their affiliation with western companies. Over a two-day period, the 250 security and crisis management professionals from U.S. government agencies, NGOs, and MNCs presented and participated in presentations and break-out sessions, sharing experiences and their own lessons learned in order to improve the overall cooperative effort to respond in crises.²¹ Undoubtedly, this conference was very helpful for many who participated or were educated on its outcome.

When posts or task forces create an AAR they often include specific recommendations on how to improve the local NEO process. Some of these lessons could be applied to a much larger group. These are often distributed by cable to relevant posts or the department at large. Undoubtedly this process is helpful to some. However, this distribution process may not be especially effective due to the large number of cables received by embassies and no designated central repository for lessons learned. Fortunately, since the formation of DSCLL, there is at least a resource for posts to access relevant AARs as they form their own EAPs. Also, thanks to DSCLL, trends can be identified among AARs.

One trend identified in multiple AARs was the need for improvement in communication between the DOD and DOS. Particularly, as identified by the DSCLL representative, is the lack of a commonality of language between DOD and DOS in the planning and executions phases. The DOD has made a concerted effort to learn how DOSs EAPs are constructed and facilitating a better understanding of the language and method of planning. From the DOS perspective, DS implemented the DPP, which specifically seeks to provide a common understanding and language in the planning process. The below included graphic depicts the DPP, which draws from the MDMP and MCPP. This is a positive step toward a common or shared understanding with DOD counterparts, but due to the recent implementation of this process there remains a lack of knowledge regarding the process. To see the true and eventual benefits from this effort, it will take time to train current and incoming personnel.

DS DELIBERATE PLANNING PROCESS

OPERATIONAL AND TACTICAL LEVEL FLOW CHART

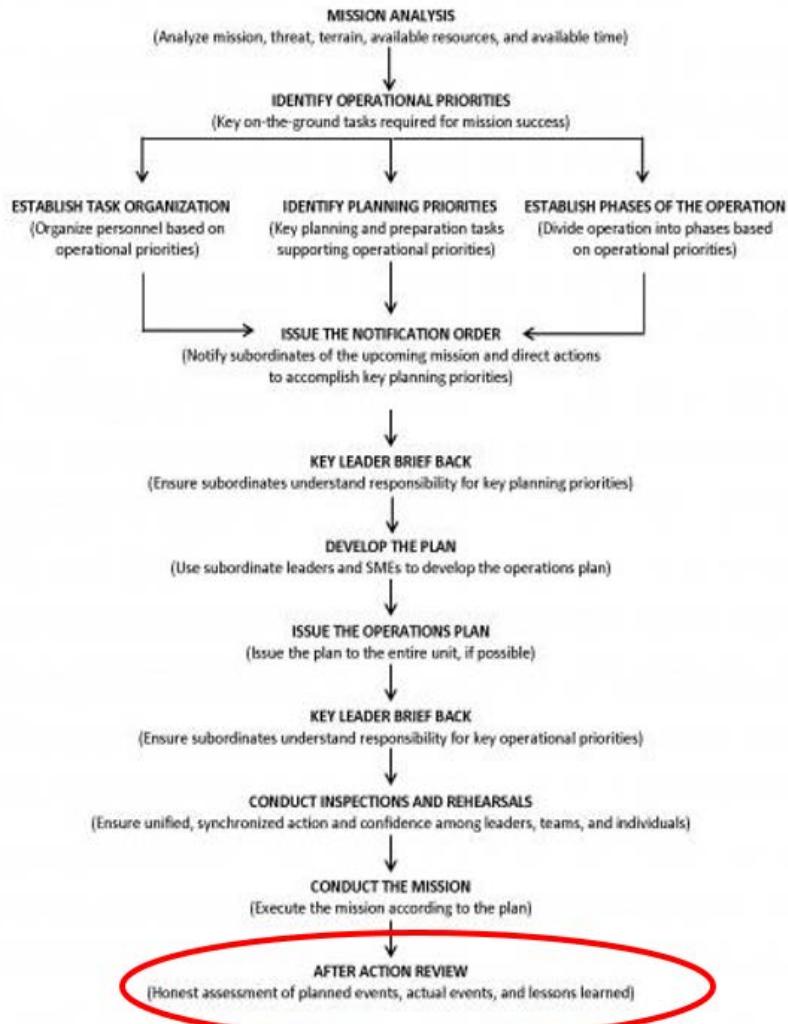


Figure 6. Deliberate Planning Process

Source: DS Center for Lessons Learned, “A Phased Approach for Leveraging Tactical and Operational-Level Observations for Producing Strategic-Level Change” (PowerPoint presentation, DS Operations Planning Staff, September 8, 2015), 3.

External efforts at improving the NEO lessons learned process include the GAO Report and the Independent Review Panel, which both had numerous recommendations.

Some of those have been implemented at DOS. Internal efforts include conferences, individual NEO AARs, DSCLLs identification of trends and attempts to address them, and training efforts. The effectiveness of all these efforts could be improved.

What can DOS learn from the Army's Lesson Learned process to improve DOS' NEO AAR and Lessons Learned methods?

The Center for Army Lessons Learned (CALL) was established in 1985.²² It has been growing and improving its methods for the last 30 years, and the DOS and DSCLL could learn much from it in regards to improving their AAR and Lessons Learned Methods. The Army has learned that in order for its Lessons Learned office to be successful, a certain degree of manpower, and an organized structure and division of responsibilities is necessary. They've developed a process that fully completes the full circle of "Learning a Lesson," rather than just being a data collection point. CALL has also developed an integrated relationship with those it serves. It presents a product to those who need it while simultaneously asking that group to contribute to the whole in their turn, and it has an established method for getting clout and support from upper management to integrate desired changes. CALL is looking to IBM Watson as the future of its computer analysis program. CALL seeks to engage and integrate other agencies in their efforts. CALL effectively incorporates changes into the training regimen.

How is CALL structured and how does it function?

CALL is currently organized with a headquarters element, an operations and plans section, administrative function, and a collections division. The collection division, in practice, runs the liaison (LNO) program. CALL has LNOs within the majority of the

geographic combatant commands and at the combat training center. Additionally, CALL has an imbed program, wherein reservists and national guardsmen are assigned for six months to one year in the operational environment. Currently, these imbedded soldiers are stationed in the Kuwait CJTF, Africa and ARCENT headquarters and USARAF headquarters. These individuals serve as the eyes and ears forward for CALL. The analysis division is responsible for reviewing the reports and information submitted to CALL and producing products based upon what they are seeing. The dissemination office serves a publishing function. Within this office are editors, graphic artists and others who actually do the packaging of CALL products based upon the needs of the intended audience. The Army Lessons Learned Program Division, is responsible for the plans and policies, as well as monitoring the function of the program. This office is taking an Army-wide look at what is going on. The Army Lessons Learned forum branch, facilitates meetings where Army senior leadership can come together to hear what the force is saying and at the same time, make decisions on ways forward with this information. Finally, the Facilitation Division coordinates with interagency partners, such as DOS or USAID, as well as with multi-national partners.²³

Compared to DSCLL, the Army's CALL is much more mature and better resourced. The addition of more personnel within DSCLL is a way to improve their overall capability and responsiveness. During the interview with DSCLL the statement was made that their ability to conduct any meaningful collection, trend analysis, sharing, or integration is limited due to the fact that there are only three people within DSCLL tasked with this process. In their observation of traditional AAR and lessons learned programs, you need to have 30 or more people to be effective.²⁴

According to David Futch, CALL is the central point for collecting, analyzing and distributing lessons learned, but it is not the only point. Army proponents, such as infantry, cyber, or armor, are responsible for lessons learned within those specific areas. CALL takes on the Army's broader issues.²⁵ He states, "This way of doing business, having a central point of collection, analysis and distribution, yet pushing responsibility throughout the service is a great way to garner involvement and support throughout the organization. This also allows SMEs within the various proponents to conduct a more thorough analysis of why something worked or didn't work and then make recommendations for change based on a high level of expertise and understanding."²⁶ Their method is effective.

What are DSCLL and CALL's methods for capturing Lessons Learned?

In comparing the information obtained through the interviews with DSCLL and CALL, the DSCLL has largely patterned its method for collecting lessons learned and best practices on CALLs method.

Lessons Learned & Best Practice Collection Process

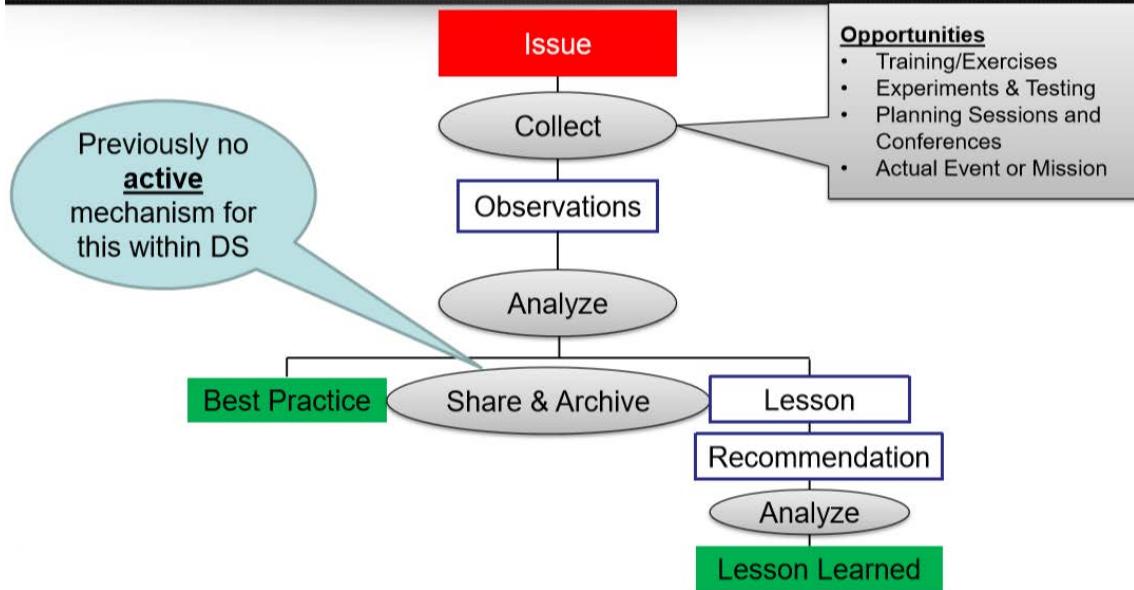


Figure 7. DSCLL Lessons Learned Collection Process

Source: DS Center for Lessons Learned, “A Phased Approach for Leveraging Tactical and Operational-Level Observations for Producing Strategic-Level Change” (PowerPoint presentation, DS Operations Planning Staff, September 8, 2015), 6.

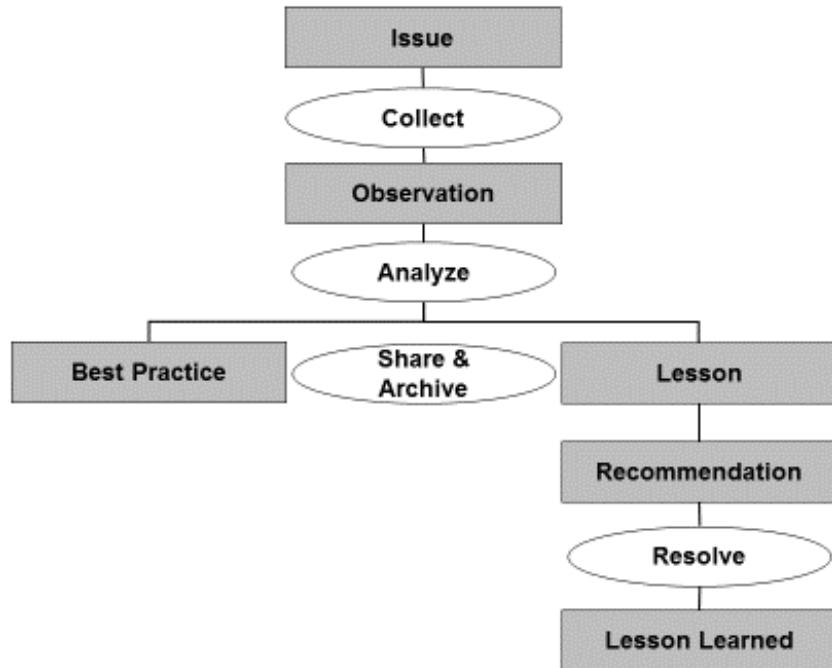


Figure 8. CALL Lessons Learned Collection Process

Source: Center for Army Lessons Learned. *Establishing a Lessons Learned Program: Observations, Insights, and Lessons* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Government Printing Office, 2011), 37.

According to Dave Futch, the Army's lessons learned process consists of four phases: discovery, validation, integration, and assessment. The discovery phase begins when someone in the organization determines that something needs to change. That change can simply be a better way of doing things or a problem that needs to be fixed. Once an observation is made, it then enters the validation phase in order to determine the adequacy of existing information and if action should be taken. If the answer is no, then the submitting person or organization is queried for further information. If the answer is yes, then an analysis will be conducted and the analyst will consolidate the findings

and submit to the validation authority. On occasion it is determined that an issue does exist, but the benefit is not worth the effort and the issue may be revisited in the future. At this point in the process, an issue that will be addressed is considered to be a “lesson identified” and not yet a lesson learned. It is in the integration phase, consisting of information dissemination to active incorporation into training, that a issue can be resolved. This integration phase can take place at the unit level all the way up to the Army Lessons Learned forum. This forum will determine the appropriate personnel needed to address the issue at hand. Once an issue has been identified, analyzed, validated, integrated, and actual change occurs, it is then considered to be a lesson learned. The problem again, is that with only three staff members, DSCLL is only making it to the collect part of the chart, though they advocate the full process.

What is the Army's process for conducting AARs?

Within the Army, the AAR process is really a two way street between CALL and units. CALL seeks to proactively provide relevant information about tactics, techniques, and procedures specific to their future CTC or theater deployments. In return, CALL solicits feedback on specific observations, information, and feedback they would like to receive from units, both during and following their deployment. By establishing this relationship early on, it facilitates a more constant flow of information between CALL and deployed units.²⁷

What is the Army's process for sharing
those Lessons Learned?

During the interview with Mr. Futch, he explained that in 2006-07, there was a realization that across DOD different entities had their own systems for capturing and distributing lessons learned, but they were closed systems. Meaning, only people within the service could access those lessons. Collectively, the various services decided to adopt and contribute to the Joint Lessons Learned Information System (JLLIS).²⁸ Through the JLLIS participants can query information, comment on observations, and share updates directly with those linked to the specific AAR or lesson learned. Mr. Futch indicated that IBM Watson is being loaded into the JLLIS. IBM Watson is an analytical tool that can comb through thousands of records contained in JLLIS and provide reports based on search criteria. It can also provide notifications to users, as new documents or information is added to the system, related to the query.²⁹

How is the interagency community involved
in the AAR and lessons learned process?

Several non-military agencies such as FEMA and DOE are active users and contributors to the JLLIS. Other agencies such as NASA and the CIA established their own lessons learned programs. DOS and USAID have their own existing sections within the JLLIS, but are hesitant to utilize this system due to concerns over information security. One additional obstacle to DOS use of the JLLIS is the enabling of DOS Common Access Card (CAC) equivalent, on DOD systems.³⁰

How are these Lessons Learned incorporated back into training and future operations?

When asked this question, CALL's Dave Futch explained that there are two aspects to this question. First, there is the operational force and their training exercises. Second, is the institutional side. In many regards, implementing changes to the operational side is much easier, because commanders have direct control of the training process. Observations made in the field can result in an almost instantaneous change to the operational force. Change in the institutional side of the Army takes place at a slower rate, due to the laborious process of changing doctrine.³¹

Futch also explained that CALL is constantly seeking to expand training and educational efforts about the lessons learned process and programs, through pre-command courses, Command and General Staff Officer Course electives, and other training opportunities. They are also working to increase awareness of CALL programs. In addition to using social media to inform soldiers, CALL is also currently in the process of hiring a public affairs person, whose focus will be getting news and information out about the lessons learned program.³²

DOS through the Foreign Service Institute's Crisis Management Training section, conducts crisis management exercises at embassies. Additionally, the CMS facilitates training for DOS employees interested in serving on a Task Force during a crisis event. Members of the DS Operations Planning Staff attend the DS High Threat Operations Course to provide mentorship on how to conduct "hot washes" or AARs. DS also integrates agents into pre-deployment rehearsals for the Marine Expeditionary Units (MEU) and Special Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Forces (SPMAGTF). These various training exercises allow DOS and DS to implement their lessons learned and best

practices.³³ While it is commendable that efforts are being made to improve operations and responses to crises, the current method only reaches a small section of the entire Department. Like CALL, DOS should seek to implement lessons learned training and information into the training and education at all levels. An effort should also be made to further inform staff of the availability of lessons learned programs.

While not every aspect of the Army's lessons learned program and CALLs way of doing things will work for DOS, there are many valuable lessons that can be incorporated into a DOS program. If DOS develops a center for lessons learned and as the DSCLL continues to grow, they could benefit from IBM Watson or a like program. They also need adequate personnel to take an observation through the entire lesson learned process. The development of a cooperative relationship between the DSCLL or DOS lesson learned center will enhance the effectiveness of the program. A willingness to share information with outside entities and interagency partners will further the body of knowledge and benefit the larger government community. Finally, incorporating awareness of the lessons learned program into training at all levels will encourage greater participation in the program.

This section addressed each of the secondary questions. The current DOS process for conducting a NEO, NEO AARs, and capturing lessons learned was defined. Previous recommendations made by outside entities to improve the process were addressed. The Center for Army Lessons Learned process was analyzed to determine what aspects of it might be applied to the DOS NEO lessons learned process. Chapter 5 will contain conclusions and recommendations.

¹ Michael Fowler, telephone interview by author, April 4, 2016.

² Stephanie Medvigy McEntee, e-mail message to author, March 7, 2016.

³ U.S. Department of State, *Under Secretary for Political Affairs*, January 20, 2009, accessed March 28, 2016, <http://www.state.gov/p/>.

⁴ Fowler.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ DS Operations Planning Staff, *DS Center for Lessons Learned* (2015), 13.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Fowler.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² David Futch, interview with the author, March 8, 2016.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ United States Government Accountability Office (GAO), *State Department: Evacuation Planning and Preparations for Overseas Posts Can Be Improved* (Washington, DC: GAO, 2007), 4.

¹⁵ Ibid., 47-48.

¹⁶ Independent Panel on Best Practices, *Report of The Independent Panel on Best Practices* (Washington, DC: US State Department, 2013), 13.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid., 15.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Fowler.

²¹ Elena Carrington and Meredith Wilson, “Crisis Management And Evacuation Best Practices” (Summary of OSAC-ConocoPhillips Best Practices for Crisis

Management and Evacuation conference, U.S. State Department, Washington, DC, July 13, 2011).

²² Futch.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Fowler.

²⁵ Futch.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ Fowler.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

Do improvements need to be made in the Department of State's process for conducting AARs and capturing lessons learned in the aftermath of a noncombatant evacuation operation? The short answer to this question is yes. DOS needs to establish a formal lessons learned center. This will benefit the end users at embassies and consulates who are directly responsible for evacuation operations. It will also serve as a means to share information with other embassies and consulates who may be planning and preparing for future evacuations. DSCLL needs to increase the number of personnel dedicated to collecting, analyzing, sharing, and resolving observed issues. Particular attention must be paid to the analysis and resolutions aspects. The use of IBM Watson or similar program would be a force multiplier in the analysis effort and could reduce the personnel requirement to adequately analyze observations.

What is the current DOS method for conducting NEOs and NEO AARs and capturing lessons learned following a NEO? The DOS does use a variety of knowledge management tools to attempt to distribute information throughout the department. Additionally, AARs are conducted as a matter of practice following NEOs. However, the AARs are inadequate in terms of inclusiveness and comprehensiveness. There are few examples of an interagency or joint AARs from past NEOs. Each action taken by one agency or department will inevitably have second and third order effects and will ultimately impact on the efforts of the others involved. A collaborative AAR process would allow the various participants to identify where and how other's involvement

impacted on their operations and how to either deconflict efforts or enable a truly unified effort. DOS's current limited approach is not conducive to improving the whole of government approach and not only leads to inefficiencies in responses and processes, but also has the potential to result in the loss of life.

What previous recommendations have been made, especially by outside entities, to improve the lessons learned process in the aftermath of a NEO? The GAO attempted to address the topic of lessons learned for NEOs through a recommendation for the DoS to create an office responsible for collecting, analyzing, and distributing lessons learned. This recommendation met with some resistance. The 2013 Independent Panel on Best Practices also recommended the creation of a DOS center for lessons learned as well as one within the Bureau of Diplomatic Security. DSCLL was formed shortly after and the M/PRI is reviewing the creation of a lessons learned center.

What can DOS learn from the Army's Lesson Learned process to improve DOS' NEO AAR and Lessons Learned methods? The DOS could gain much by establishing a formalized center for lessons learned like the CALL. They should allocate enough resources to make it capable of following the entire formal lessons learned process to ensure change is implemented and successful. CALL is actively seeking to glean the lessons, pertinent to the Army, and feed those lessons back into the training, doctrine, and educational curriculum. Additionally as a participating member in the JLLIS, they are feeding information into the joint platform to benefit the whole. Similar efforts by DOS would be beneficial to the whole department as well as the NEO AAR process.

The Office of Management Policy, Rightsizing, and Innovation (M/PRI) within DOS is currently spearheading the effort to create a lessons learned program for the

Department. The Bureau of Diplomatic Security within DOS established the DSCLL in an effort to initiate a formalized effort to captures lessons learned. They futher developed an AAR template to standardize the information collected. Each agency will benefit from developing and maintaining their own internal lessons learned program, as missions specific to each agency vary, despite certain overlapping areas.

Recommendations

1. Create a dedicated lessons learned office (Department of State Center for Lessons Learned – DOSCLL) within the DOS, using CALL as a template. This will eliminate the need to recreate something from nothing and will also facilitate increased interoperability.
2. Develop a standardized format for conducting AARs following NEOs and other DOS operations, with a specific emphasis on a joint approach. Establish policy or perhaps even legislation that requires all interagency partners to conduct joint AARs, when participating in joint operations, with the broadest participation possible. This should include host nation officials, NGOs, multi-national corporations, and third country officials.
3. DOS should seek broader access to JLLIS and educate Department personnel on the use of this system in order to further contribute to the body of knowledge for the joint and interagency partners. One of the current shortcomings of current lessons learned and knowledge management tools used by DOS is that they are not intuitive and do not facilitate easy access to lessons learned at the time and place where they are most needed. There are current efforts to develop tools that use an intuitive method to maximize

benefits from previous lessons learned. The early identification of a suitable application and early implementation will save time and money in the long run. It will also translate into an overall lessons learned system that can provide immediate benefit to the end users. One simple solution to this issue would be to utilize JLLIS along with the integration of IBM Watson into this system. This would address some of the collection, analysis, and distribution issues through a ready made system.

4. Expand education and training efforts to increase awareness of the lessons learned program. Until individuals are made aware of the products and resources available and further trained on how to effectively implement and utilize them, progress will be severely limited. DOS can learn from the Army's current efforts in this realm. They have taken a proactive approach to this issue and have integrated "lessons learned" training into all levels of soldier education. Education efforts currently exist at the NCO academies, at the Command and General Staff College, and the pre-command course. In order for a lessons learned program to become effective at DOS, education must be incorporated at all levels of training, from the newly hired to mid-level and senior leaders.

If DOS implements these recommendations they will improve their response to NEOs and other critical DOS operations. They can also become a valuable contributing member of the interagency community in the realm of NEOs, as multiple agencies, departments, NGOs, multinational corporations, and foreign governments work together

to protect and preserve the lives of U.S. citizens and those of our allies and partner countries.

APPENDIX A
DS AFTER ACTION REPORT - TEMPLATE

AFTER ACTION REVIEW
TYPE OF SECURITY INCIDENT
NAME OF POST
SELECT DATE OF INCIDENT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Click here to enter text... *This section to be finalized by the applicable IP Regional Directorate following a review of the below completed sections and after possible input from other Directorates...*

SYNOPSIS OF EVENTS

Click here to enter text... *This section to be completed by the RSO to include: a time line of significant events leading up to the incident and the final outcome...*

GENERAL POST BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Click here to enter text... *This section to be completed by the RSO to include: a geographic orientation of the location where the events occurred, the layout of the relevant compound and buildings, the physical and technical countermeasure in place, the SETL ratings, the tenant agencies, FSO/LES staffing numbers, security staffing with SPE resources (Agents, MSGs, RSO LES, LGF, SD, local Military/Police in support, etc.), and other significant factors (historical, cultural, political, economic, etc.) contributing to the incident...*

PLANNED RESPONSE

Click here to enter text... *This section to be completed by the RSO referencing established Security Policies and Guards Orders (All Mission Personnel, RSO, MSG, LGF, SD, local Military/Police, etc.) pertinent to the type of incident...*

ACTUAL RESPONSE

Click here to enter text... *This section to be completed by the RSO giving a brief explanation of the security response that in fact occurred...*

LESSONS LEARNED

Issue # 1 – Click here to enter text...

- Discussion – Click here to enter text...
- Recommendation – Click here to enter text...
Short-term: Click here to enter text...
Long-term: Click here to enter text...
- Action – Click here to enter text...
 1. RSO: Click here to enter text...
 2. DS IP: Click here to enter text...
 3. Other: Click here to enter text...

Issue # 2 – Click here to enter text...

- Discussion – Click here to enter text...
- Recommendation – Click here to enter text...
Short-term: Click here to enter text...
Long-term: Click here to enter text...
- Action – Click here to enter text...
 1. RSO: Click here to enter text...
 2. DS IP: Click here to enter text...
 3. Other: Click here to enter text...

Issue # 3 –

- Discussion – Click here to enter text...
- Recommendation – Click here to enter text...
Short-term: Click here to enter text...
Long-term: Click here to enter text...
- Action – Click here to enter text...
 1. RSO: Click here to enter text...
 2. DS IP: Click here to enter text...
 3. Other: Click here to enter text...

ATTACHMENTS: (suggested annexes if needed)

- Annex A – Neighborhood/Compound Overview Map/Photo
- Annex B – Building(s) Floor Plan(s)
- Annex C – Camera Coverage Sketch
- Annex D – Link to Photographs/Video Coverage of Incident
- Annex E – RSO Spot Report for this Incident
- Annex F – Related Incident Matrix from available Regional/Global Data
- Annex G – Security Policies and Guards Orders relevant to the Incident

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